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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000813

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, AF S/E NATSIOS, AND AF/SPG
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND SHORTLEY
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EAID](#) [AU](#) [UN](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: SPLM DARFUR CONFERENCE: ABDELWAHID AND FINANCES
REMAIN OBSTACLES

Classified By: CDA Roberto Powers, Reason: Sections 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: The Sudanese People's Liberation Movement continues to move towards a June 11 commencement of "consolidation talks" between Darfur rebels interested in participating in a rejuvenated political process. Limited financial resources and a lack of clarity on future funding streams impede their current efforts. Sudan Liberation Movement leader-in-exile Abdelwahid Nur has also resurfaced as an obstacle, placing conditions on his rebel factions, attendance, and demanding an advance meeting with First Vice President Salva Kiir. End summary.

Conference Preparations

¶2. (C) Darfur Taskforce Secretary Dr. Achier Deng Akol reviewed for PolOff May 18 ongoing preparations for the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement's (SPLM) conference to consolidate rebel viewpoints on the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA). The conference is projected to start on June 11. SPLM Darfur Envoy and Taskforce Chairman Rev. Clement Janda and James Kok are in Chad, after which they plan to travel to Eritrea and Libya. Taskforce members Dr. Pricilla Nyannyang Joseph and Edward Lino are in Darfur, meeting with traditional elders, chiefs, and rebel factions. These discussions will generate a list of civilian representatives invited to attend the Juba conference. (Note: In addition to broadening grass-roots support for the DPA, the SPLM intends for civilian participation in the Juba rebels, conference to act as a popular bulwark against rebel commander defection from the talks. End note.) Taskforce members are hand-carrying invitations for distribution to nominated representatives and rebel field commanders. Those not carrying such a document will not be permitted entry to the talks in Juba. The entire taskforce will gather in Juba on June 4 for a conference planning session capped off by a presentation to First Vice President Salva Kiir.

¶3. (C) A Sudanese expert on Darfur named Deng Ajak is accompanying Joseph and Lino in Darfur, and will provide counsel about the nominees. Achier also notes that the SPLM is awaiting funds to send two additional researchers from the University of Khartoum to join the group in the field. Achier noted that the Taskforce's funding remains insufficient to cover the travel costs and salaries of Sudanese Darfur experts, making it difficult for the SPLM to vet would-be participants. According to Achier, the Taskforce is concerned with unintentionally excluding key civilian participants (a chief criticism of the Abuja process) and equally worried about having Khartoum-backed

personas infiltrate the conference. More transparent funding streams are critical, he argued.

Abdelwahid Nur: An Erratic Obstacle

¶4. (C) Achier recounted to PolOff an early May meeting between himself, Taskforce Chair Rev. Clement Janda and a delegation of Darfur rebels. According to Achier, the rebel delegation surfaced in Juba unannounced, seeking a meeting with Government of Southern Sudan Minister for Presidential Affairs Dr. Luka Biong Deng and Taskforce Chairman Janda. Achier had a preliminary meeting to vet the group and also sat in on their meeting with Janda. The group's meeting with Janda was strained. One of the rebels (whom the SPLM believes to be a field commander) refused to identify himself. The alleged field commander announced the group's primary mission: conveying Sudan Liberation Movement leader Abdelwahid Nur's desire to meet with Kiir in Juba. Nur would not permit his SLM factions to attend the rebel conference unless such a meeting took place. The "field commander" stated that Nur "regretted deeply" not meeting with Kiir and Senior Assistant to the President Minni Minawi in Yei in 2006 and was willing to come forward now to speak with Kiir and "hand over all his files on Darfur."

Support for the SPLM Meeting

¶5. (C) The Taskforce would like to establish a technical secretariat to support the Juba consolidation talks. Given the difficulties in securing assistance to date, Achier noted they are looking for "volunteer" staffing akin to

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international technical advisors and logistical support staff present at Abuja and Naivasha. The SPLM has also requested USG assistance in understanding "lessons learned" from USG-facilitated meetings of Darfur rebel movements in Nairobi and Darfur in 2005, particularly with respect to "containing" Abdelwahid Nur.

¶6. (C) In a separate meeting with CG, Dr. Luka Biong requested USG assistance in: 1) encouraging the Darfurians to participate in the Southern Sudan conference; 2) logistics for transporting the parties to Juba; and 3) intelligence on the situation in Darfur. However, UN and AU representatives in Khartoum later reported to Embassy Khartoum that the Joint Mediation Support Team (JMST) and the SPLM Taskforce agreed that the UN and AU would provide technical and logistical support--including transportation--for the SPLM conference.

¶7. (C) Comment: The UN and AU plan to present a request for specific assistance to the international community in the near future, based on their discussions with the SPLM Taskforce. The USG should be prepared to respond to this request after the UN, AU and SPLM have agreed on the details.

End comment.
POWERS